

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAN #0750/01 3111402
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 061402Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO RHMFIUU/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0068
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1042
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1760
RHMFISS/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS ANTANANARIVO 000750

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/E - MBEYZEROV
PARIS FOR RKANEDA
LONDON FOR PLORD

E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR CJTF-HOA REAR ADMIRAL GREENE VISIT
TO MADAGASCAR

1.(SBU) SUMMARY: WELCOME TO ANTANANARIVO! YOUR VISIT TO
MADAGASCAR COMES AT A TIME WHEN OUR EFFORTS AT SECURITY
CAPACITY BUILDING IN BOTH COMOROS AND MADAGASCAR ARE
RECEIVING AN UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF HOST NATION COOPERATION.
YOUR ARRIVAL IS ONLY THE SECOND VISIT BY A COMMANDER,
COMBINED JOINT TASK FORCE, HORN OF AFRICA, MARKING ONE OF
ONLY TWO HIGH LEVEL MILITARY VISITS IN DECADES. MADAGASCAR,
UNLIKE SOME OTHER REGIONAL PARTNERS, HAS REACTED IN A PURELY
POSITIVE WAY TO THE STANDING-UP OF THE AFRICA COMMAND, AND
OFFICIALS HERE HOPE -- AS WE DO -- THAT THIS WILL PORTEND
INCREASING MIL-TO-MIL ENGAGEMENT WITH A FRIENDLY NATION THAT
IS VERY OPEN TO THE U.S. END SUMMARY.

MADAGASCAR - POLITICAL

12. (U) RELATIVE POLITICAL STABILITY, SIGNIFICANT NATURAL
RESOURCES, A STRATEGIC LOCATION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND A
DISTINCTLY PRO-AMERICAN GOVERNMENT MAKE MADAGASCAR A COUNTRY
OF GROWING INTEREST TO THE UNITED STATES. MADAGASCAR IS
IMPORTANT BECAUSE, ALMOST ALONE AMONG AFRICAN COUNTRIES, IT
IS MAKING SIMULTANEOUS PROGRESS IN CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRACY,
DEVELOPING A FREE MARKET ECONOMY, COMBATting CORRUPTION AND
TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, PREEMPTIVELY FIGHTING HIV-AIDS, AND
PROTECTING ITS UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT. IN RECOGNITION OF THESE
ACCOMPLISHMENTS, MADAGASCAR WAS SELECTED AS THE FIRST
MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE ACCOUNT (MCA) COUNTRY IN 2005. HOWEVER,
THESE ADVANCES ARE FRAGILE AND SUSCEPTIBLE TO SETBACKS IN A
COUNTRY OF HEARTBREAKING POVERTY, SHALLOW ROOTED DEMOCRATIC
TRADITIONS, AND AN UNEVEN COMMITMENT TO A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD
FOR FOREIGN INVESTORS.

MADAGASCAR - SECURITY CHALLENGES

13. (SBU) IN TERMS OF SECURITY, MADAGASCAR,S MARITIME BORDERS
CONTINUE TO BE OF CONCERN AS A POSSIBLE CONDUIT OF
TRANSNATIONAL CRIME, TERRORISM AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION.
MADAGASCAR COOPERATES CLOSELY WITH US IN COMBATting TERRORISM
AND SEEKING TO PREVENT POSSIBLE AL-QAEDA MEMBERS OR OTHERS
USING THE POROUS BORDER TO TRANSIT FROM MAINLAND AFRICA OR
THE MIDDLE EAST TO MADAGASCAR TO TRAIN, RECRUIT, AND/OR BUILD
TERRORIST INFRASTRUCTURE. HOWEVER, THE HUMAN AND MATERIAL
RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR THIS EFFORT ARE LIMITED. AN ISLAND
NATION, MADAGASCAR ONLY RECENTLY PROCURED (FROM THE EU) ITS
FIRST VESSEL CAPABLE OF CIRCUMNAVIGATING ITS OWN TERRITORY.
OTHER MALAGASY CONCERNS, WHICH WE SHARE, TEND TO BE MORE

ECONOMIC IN NATURE: POACHED FISHERIES, ILLEGAL LOGGING, AND SMUGGLING OF GEMSTONES, NARCOTICS AND CATTLE. THESE ISSUES ARE RAISED FREQUENTLY BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. WITHIN ITS LIMITED CAPACITY, THE GOM HAS BEEN A WILLING PARTNER ON COUNTERTERRORISM, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, AND MARITIME SECURITY ISSUES. THE GOM HAS A SMALL CONTINGENT IN DARFUR; HOSTED THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL MARITIME SECURITY CONFERENCE IN JULY 2006; CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN AND USE EXCESS DEFENSE ARTICLE (EDA) BOATS DONATED IN 2003 TO TRY TO PROTECT THEIR MARITIME DOMAIN; INVESTED IN PORT AND AIRPORT SECURITY; AND HAS RESPONDED QUITE POSITIVELY TO THE STANDING-UP OF THE AFRICA COMMAND. YOUR VISIT WILL BE AN OPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN IN SOME DEPTH WHAT IT WILL MEAN -- AND NOT MEAN -- FOR MADAGASCAR TO BE WITHIN AFRICOM'S AOR.

COMOROS - POLITICAL

¶4. (SBU) THE UNION OF COMOROS CURRENTLY ENJOYS STATUS AS ONE OF A LIMITED NUMBER OF MODERATE MUSLIM DEMOCRACIES. HOWEVER, THE STABILITY IS HISTORICALLY TENUOUS AS THE COMORAN UNION HAS HAD NUMEROUS COUPS SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1975. A 2008 INVASION/LIBERATION OF ANJOUAN TOOK PLACE ON MARCH 25 WITH AN AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT LED BY THE COMOROS AND BACKED BY AFRICAN UNION FORCES FROM TANZANIA AND SUDAN, WITH DIPLOMATIC AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FROM THE U.S., LIBYA, AND OTHERS. THE OPERATION ACHIEVED ITS OBJECTIVE OF TOPPLING ANJOUAN RENEGADE WARLORD COLONEL MOHAMMED BACAR, WHO HAD REFUSED TO STEP DOWN AS ISLAND PRESIDENT (GOVERNOR) AS CONSTITUTIONALLY REQUIRED IN 2007 AND CONDUCTED A SHAM ELECTION TO PROLONG HIMSELF IN OFFICE IN DEFIANCE OF THE UNION GOVERNMENT, THE AU, AND

PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL OPINION. MOUSSA TOYBOU WON THE PEACEFUL ELECTIONS FOR ANJOUAN PRESIDENT HELD ON JUNE 15 AND 29, 2008. THERE HAS BEEN CONTINUING POLITICAL TENSION AS THE 2010 UNION PRSIDENTIAL ELECTION DRAWS NEARER. UNION PRESIDENT SAMBI HAS

VOICED INTENTIONS TO SEEK A POPULAR REFERENDUM TO REVIEW AND REVISE THE CURRENT CONSTITUTION. WHILE SAMBI PROMISES THAT HE WILL STEP DOWN IN 2010 AND ONLY SEEKS TO MAKE THE SYSTEM FUNCTION BETTER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY, SUSPICION OVER HIS "REAL" INTENTIONS ARE RIFE: MANY ARE FEARFUL THAT HE WILL SEEK TO ALTER THE PRINCIPLE OF THE PRESIDENCY ROTATING AMONG THE THREE ISLANDS AND SEEK TO PROLONG HIS OWN MANDATE BEYOND ¶2012. THIS HAS EXACERBATED LONG-STANDING CONCERNS OVER THE FRAGILE BALANCE BETWEEN ISLAND AUTONOMY AND REPRESENTATION IN THE UNION GOVERNMENT. ADDITIONAL TENSIONS STEM FROM RISING FOOD PRICES, PERSISTENT FUEL AND ELECTRICITY SHORTAGES, AND PERCEIVED GOVERNMENT MIS-MANAGEMENT OF THESE ISSUES.

COMOROS - SECURITY CHALLENGES

¶5. (SBU) COMOROS IS A NATION WITH LITTLE, IF ANY, CONTROL OVER ITS BORDERS AND MARITIME SPACES. THEY HAVE NO MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS, NO ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITY AND NO AIR OR SURFACE ASSETS FOR PATROL. THE THREE ISLANDS IN THE UNION EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT ILLEGAL TRAFFIC IN BOTH DIRECTIONS ON AN AXIS FROM THE EAST AFRICAN COAST THROUGH THE COMORAN UNION, MAYOTTE AND MADAGASCAR. ILLICIT TRAFFICKING INCLUDES DRUGS, CATTLE, AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS. DUE TO THE LACK OF MARITIME AWARENESS, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ASCERTAIN THE TRUE SCALE OF ILLEGAL FISHING IN COMORAN WATERS. SINCE THE RECOVERY OF ANJOUAN ISLAND, THE COMORAN DEFENSE FORCES ARE SEEKING TO EXPAND THEIR NUMBERS TO REPLACE THE AU FORCES DEPARTING THE ISLAND. THE MILITARY IS HAMPERED BY LACK OF RESOURCES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY WHICH CAN RESTRICT COMORAN PARTICIPATION IN U.S. COURSES. THE COMORANS WILL RECEIVE AN FMF-PURCHASED ARCHANGEL PATROL BOAT IN 2009 AS THEIR FIRST DEDICATED MARITIME PATROL ASSET.

COMOROS - CJTF-HOA INFLUENCE

¶6. (U) AT THE MOMENT, THE CJTF-HOA PROJECTS CONDUCTED BY THE

CONSTRUCTION BATTALION AND CIVIL AFFAIRS TEAM ARE THE MOST
VISIBLE DIRECT U.S. AID EFFORT IN THE ISLANDS. (USAID ALSO
HAS SMALL EDUCATION AND MICRO-FINANCE PROJECTS, AND THERE IS
A ROBUST "AMERICAN CORNER" IN MORONI AS WELL.) THE TEAMS
HAVE HAD A BENEFICIAL EFFECT, BOTH DIRECTLY THROUGH THE
PROJECTS AND INDIRECTLY THROUGH THEIR PRESENCE AND POSITIVE
INTERACTION WITH THE COMORAN PUBLIC. THE U.S. EMBASSY (AND
PRESIDENT SAMBI HIMSELF) SEEKS TO SHIFT THE EMPHASIS TO
PROJECTS THAT CAN BE COMPLETED MORE RAPIDLY AND
OST-EFFECTIVELY FOR A MORE IMMEDIATE IMPACT. FOR OBVIOUS
POLITICAL REASONS, IT IS ALSO NECESSARY TO EXTEND CJTF-HOA'S
ACTIVITIES TO THE ISLANDS OF MOHELI AND ANJOUAN AS RAPIDLY AS
POSSIBLE; HERETOFORE ALL PROJECTS HAVE OCCURRED ON THE ISLAND
OF GRANDE COMORE. WE ALSO SEEK TO DIRECTLY INVOLVE COMORAN
MILITARY "HANDS-ON" AND MIL-TO-MIL IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
PROJECTS. WE ALSO SUPPORT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE INVITATION TO
A COMORAN LIAISON OFFICER TO DJIBOUTI. TWO ISSUES FOR FUTURE
EXPLORATION ARE THE REQUEST BY THE COMORAN GOVERNMENT FOR
CJTF-HOA TO TRAIN POLICE FORCES ON THE ISLAND OF ANJOUAN, AND
THE POSSI
BILITY OF THE SEABEE MEDIC ENGAGING IN ANTI-MALARIA
ASSISTANCE. WITH THE ABOVE CAVEATS, THE AMBASSADOR STRONGLY
SUPPORTS A CONTINUING CJTF-HOA PRESENCE IN THE COMOROS.

MADAGASCAR - CJTF-HOA INFLUENCE

17. (U) THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO DIRECT CJTF-HOA PROJECTS IN
MADAGASCAR. HOWEVER, MADAGASCAR WOULD PROVIDE AMPLE
OPPORTUNITY FOR -- AND WELCOME -- HOA ENGAGEMENT. RECENT
INITIATIVES BY CJTF-HOA TO HELP OBTAIN AUTOMATED
IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS (AIS) ACCOMPLISHES ONE OF THE FIRST
NECESSARY STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TANGIBLE MARITIME
SECURITY CAPABILITY. ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIAISON OFFICER
PROVIDES THE FIRST ESTABLISHED OPERATIONAL LINK BETWEEN THE

U.S. AND MALAGASY MILITARIES. CONTINUED LIAISON AND TRAINING
OPPORTUNITIES ARE DESIRED, RESOURCES PERMITTING. ALSO, OTHER
COMMITMENTS PERMITTING, IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO INVESTIGATE
THE POSSIBILITY OF PARTICIPATING WITH THE WELL-DRILLING
ASSETS IN MADAGASCAR OR OTHER HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS PROGRAMS
WITHIN HOA'S CAPABILITIES.

MADAGASCAR - TALKING POINTS

18. (SBU) IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT MALAGASY LEADERS WILL
RAISE THEIR DESIRE FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE WITH SECURITY FOR THE
AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT THIS COMING JULY. THE GOM RAISED THE
ISSUE WITH US RECENTLY IN AN ACTIVE EFFORT TO OBTAIN USG
ASSISTANCE TO HELP WITH PLANNING, AND HOA OR AFRICOM
ASSISTANCE WOULD BE WELCOME IF FEASIBLE; OTHER POSSIBLE
RESPONSES ARE UNDER REVIEW. THE PENDING ACQUISITION OF AIS
RECEIVERS WOULD A GOOD NEWS STORY APPROPRIATE FOR DELIVERY TO
THE PRIME MINISTER AND/OR MINISTER OF DEFENSE DURING YOUR
CALLS HERE; THE ISSUE WAS FIRST BRIEFED TO PRESIDENT
RAVALOMANANA DURING HIS OCTOBER 2007 VISIT ABOARD THE USS
NORMANDY, AND HE REACTED POSITIVELY TO IT. MOST IMPORTANTLY,
YOUR VISIT PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO EMPHASIZE THAT WHILE
MADAGASCAR HAS A TRADITION OF INSULARITY, THEY HAVE A GREAT
OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE REGIONAL SECURITY LEADERSHIP IN THE
SOUTHWEST INDIAN OCEAN (SWIO). THE STANDING UP OF THE AFRICA
COMAND, WITH MADAGASCAR NOW WITHIN ITS AOR RATHER THAN
PACOM'S, SHOULD SIGNIFICANTLY INC
REASE OUR MIL-TO-MIL ENGAGEMENT HERE. AFTER YEARS ON THE FAR
PERIPHERY OF ENGAGEMENT WITH THE U.S., THAT MESSAGE ALONE
WILL BE MUSIC TO MALAGASY EARS.
MARQUARDT